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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 23 March 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations in New York presents its compliments to the President of the United Nations General Assembly and has the honour to inform him that the Algerian Government has decided to submit its candidacy for the first elections to the Human Rights Council to be held on 9 May 2006.

Algeria attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights, and is certain that it will make a positive and constructive contribution to the Human Rights Council by fostering dialogue and consultation.

Guided by its own history, Algeria has always ranked self-determination of peoples among its priorities for the promotion of human rights, and has made a definite contribution in that area.

On the internal level, since its independence, it has worked to establish institutions capable of ensuring the exercise of the fundamental rights of its citizens in the areas of education, health, social protection, labour, access to safe drinking water, power, housing and land. This has enabled it to achieve considerable social progress, in particular significant reductions in poverty and the rate of illiteracy.

The strengthening of the democratic and reform process undertaken at the end of the 1980s has opened the way in particular to political pluralism in elected institutions. Civil society is remarkable in its dynamism and the press is distinguished by the variety, richness and liberty of its tone.

With concern for the indissociability, interdependence and universality of human rights, Algeria has a major interest in the right to solidarity, the so-called third generation rights, such as the right to development and the environment.

Algeria is aware of the fundamental role of women in building a progressive society firmly committed to modernity, and it has guaranteed to women in its Constitution and through its legislation full participation in economic, social and

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political life without distinction as compared to men. It is actively engaged in the consolidation and promotion of women's rights and has made steady progress in the emancipation of its society.

Algeria is certain that the establishment of the rule of law and the promotion of a culture of human rights are key elements for its stability and prosperity. The Government has undertaken a reform of the justice sector to bring it progressively into conformity with international norms; it has introduced required courses on human rights into the educational system and is encouraging the propagation of the culture of human rights within society. This culture is reinforced by the establishment of an independent national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights, the National Commission on Human Rights.

Its adherence to all of the international legal instruments on human rights has enabled it to bring its national legislation gradually up to the level of international standards.

Algeria has unfailingly honoured its commitments under the treaties it has ratified and has demonstrated its openness to the outside world by regularly submitting its periodic reports under the conventions ratified and by receiving non-governmental organizations whenever requested.

Furthermore, the election of Algerian experts to serve on the human rights treaty-monitoring bodies constitutes a recognition of Algeria's active role in humanitarian diplomacy.

United Nations human rights reform indeed represents an opportunity to overcome the passivity of the former situation of politicization, selectivity and double standards in human rights. Algeria is convinced that it is through dialogue and cooperation that the situation of human rights in the world will progress and is deeply attached to the universal values and principles that constitute the foundation of the Charter of the United Nations; out of respect for multilateralism, it has therefore made sustained efforts during the negotiation phase to reach the broadest possible consensus for the establishment of the Human Rights Council.

We now have a subsidiary body to the General Assembly, the most representative body possible, whose rules and functioning, we are convinced, will allow the international community to achieve the necessary objectives for the promotion of human rights.

If elected to the Council, Algeria will take resolute action for the promotion and protection of human rights by advocating for equal treatment of human rights, of all human rights and for all States. It will promote dialogue and coordination and will recommend assistance in achieving universal human rights objectives to those who express the need for it.

As it is determined to pursue its democratic path responsibly, Algeria is prepared to meet the challenge of having its performance in the area of human rights reviewed.